(b) The Surveys/Search & Seizure operation is a tool of Investigation. Under the Income Tax Act/Wealth Tax Act, investigation culminates into an assessment which then is a subject matter of appeal. The appeals often go up to High Court/Supreme Court. The unaccounted wealth can only be finally known when appeals, etc. are finalized.

SBI ATMs in Delhi

2879. SHRI HARISH RAWAT: Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state:

(a) the number of State Bank of India branches in Delhi covered with ATM facility;

(b) whether the SBI branch at DDA, Vikas Sadan, INA Colony is having the ATM facility; and

(c) if not, the reasons therefor and by when, the said facility will be made available which may benefit a number of people visiting DDA office?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF FINANCE (SHRI S.S. PALANIMANICKAM): (a) State Bank of India has reported that there are 205 ATMs in Delhi hosted by 141 ATM branches.

(b) Yes, Sir.

(c) Does not arise

Committee to improve working of RRBs

†2880. SHRI HARISH RAWAT: Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether any Committee has been constituted to look for measures to improve working and financial status of the Regional Rural Banks;

(b) whether there is any proposal to bring these banks under control of an apex bank and bring them under administrative and financial control of NABARD to make them village oriented;

†Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.

(c) if so, the details thereof; and

(d) if not, the details of steps being taken to improve the condition of Regional Rural Banks?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF FINANCE (SHRI S.S. PALANIMANICKAM): (a) Several Working Groups and Committees were set up from time to time to deliberate on the issues relating to Regional Rural Banks (RRBs) with focus on suggesting measures to improve the working and financial status of RRBs. Recently, Reserve Bank of India (RBI) has constituted an Internal Working Group on RRBs under the Chairmanship of Shri A.V. Sardesai, Executive Director of RBI to examine, *inter-alia*, the working of RRBs and suggest measures to strengthen and reposition them as an effective instrument of credit delivery in the Indian financial system.

(b) No, Sir.

(c) Does not arise.

(d) Reserve Bank of India (RBI), National Bank for Agriculture and Rural Development (NABARD) and Government of India have introduced several policy measures for improving the condition of RRBs. The important amongst them are as under:

1. Government has decided that each sponsor bank will be held squarely accountable for the performance of RRBs under its control. RRBs that adopt a new governance standard and that abide by the prudential regulations will qualify for receiving funds from the Government for restructuring.
2. With a view to strengthen and improve the viability of RRBs, a process has been initiated for structural consolidation of RRBs by amalgamation of geographically contiguous RRBs sponsored by the same bank with a State.
3. In order to reduce NPAs as also to improve recovery, compromise settlement of dues through Lok Adalats has been introduced.
4. In order to build up the skills and expertise of the personnel of RRBs, NABARD continued to give special priority to RRBs to train their staff through training institutions like Bankers Institute for Rural Development (BIRD), Lucknow, Regional Training Centers at Mangalore and Bolpur. RRBs officials are being

trained in specialized areas like Project Management under Farm and Non-farm sectors, Asset-liability Management, Fund Management, apart from training in the areas of Internal Control, MIS, Personnel Management and Industrial Relations.

5. Revised instructions were issued for maintenance of SLR by RRBs requiring them to maintain their SLR only in Government and other approved securities.

6. In respect of loss incurring RRBs, Sponsor Banks have been advised to evolve Bank Specific Strategic Plan for attainment of viability in a fixed time frame.

7. RBI has constituted an Empowered Committee in its Regional offices with members drawn from NABARD, sponsor banks, convenors of SLBCs and State Governments to ensure that RRBs adhere to good governance and comply with prudential regulations. The Committee would also focus on operational issues and provide clarification on regulatory issues.

Bilateral Investment Protection Agreement with Singapore

2881. SHRI RAMA MUNI REDDY SIRIGIREDDY: Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that India and Singapore have signed a Bilateral Investment Protection Agreement and Double Taxation Avoidance Agreement;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) whether there has been a proposal to allow some of the Singapore banks to open branches in India as a part of this agreement; and

(d) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF FINANCE (SHRI S.S. PALANIMANICKAM): (a) and (b) India and Singapore have signed a Comprehensive Economic Cooperation Agreement (CECA) on 29th June 2005 which entered into force on 1st August 2005. The Agreement, *inter-alia,* contains a chapter on investment that provides for reciprocal protection of investments in the two countries. Chapter 6 of the CECA is available at the website of Ministry of Commerce and Industry *viz.* http:/www.commerce.nic.in/ceca/ch6.pdf.